

Safe Routes to School

What is it?

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is a **nationwide effort encouraging children in kindergarten through eighth grade to walk or ride bikes to school.**

The N.H. Department of Transportation (NHDOT) is participating with support from the federal government under the Federal Transportation Bill, known as SAFETEA-LU.



Dr. Susan Lynch, New Hampshire's first lady, leads a group of students to Kimball School in Concord. (Concord SRTS photo. Other photos courtesy of www.iwalktoschool.org)

Our state has been allocated \$1 million per year for five years, most of which will be used to reimburse local expenses.



The advantages of SRTS are clear. Children who gain an appreciation of walking and biking are more likely to remain active and physically fit into adulthood. Encouraging children to walk or pedal will also reduce traffic congestion around schools and contribute to clean air and a healthier environment.

A state and local partnership

The state SRTS coordinator will collaborate with local schools, municipal and regional officials, parents, students and community groups to identify the best ways to encourage walking and biking. Working together, they will identify any barriers to

safe walking and biking and then find solutions.

A comprehensive approach will focus on both community organizing and physical infrastructure improvements. The program will use the “5 Es”

- **Evaluation**
- **Education**
- **Encouragement**
- **Enforcement**
- **Engineering**

Community outreach

The success of the program will depend on local efforts. School districts across the state are being encouraged to participate. In communities that demonstrate an interest in the program, the recommended first step will be the formation of a **Safe Routes to School task force**. Participants can include school administrators, principals, school nurses, physical education teachers, municipal officials, police, regional planning commissions, metropolitan planning organizations, parents, students, safety advocates and any other individuals and community organizations interested in promoting safe walking and biking.

Taking action

In this cooperative effort, team members will tailor a local program based on community needs and interest. Possibilities include:

- **Assessing** current levels of biking and walking
- **Surveying** parents and students to determine their attitudes
- **Collecting data** on the use of private cars to get kids to school
- **Mapping** sidewalks, crosswalks, shared-use paths, trails and bike lanes that can become safe routes to school
- **Teaching children safe practices for walking and riding**
- **Sponsoring events** that will encourage more walking and biking
- **Identifying needed physical improvements** for sidewalks, crosswalks, bike paths etc.
- **Coordinating with police** to increase enforcement of traffic laws
- **Conducting follow-up surveys** to see if attitudes and behaviors have changed

For more information

The coordinator of the N.H. Safe Routes to School Program is:

John W. Corrigan
N.H. Department of Transportation
Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance
7 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03302

(603) 271-1980
E-mail: jcorrigan@DOT.state.nh.us

Useful Web sites:

http://www.nh.gov/dot/bureaus/planning/SRTS_home.htm

www.saferoutesinfo.org



Youngsters walk to the New Searles Elementary School in Nashua.



Police Chief Scott Roberge leads children to school in Farmington during Walk- to-School Day.

Safe Routes to School

Physical fitness

Reduced traffic congestion

Clean air

A fun way to get to school!